

WELLINGTON (Somerset)  
URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL.



Annual Report  
For 1897.

BY

DR. J. MEREDITH

*Medical Officer of Health.*

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*Death from Zymotic Disease*—There were no deaths during the year from any of the usual zymotic diseases which call for notification, excepting one from phlegmonous erysipelas. All the other deaths were the result of the usual and ordinary causes—a very considerable number of them resulting from senile decay.

*Deaths.*—There were 115 deaths in the district during the year. Nine of these occurred in the Union Workhouse, all of whom, except one, were very old persons, and the exception was a case well over 50, who had been ill for years.

*Death Rate.*—The death rate for the year equals 15·870 per thousand, but as seven of the deaths were of persons who did not belong to the District, the local rate owing to this is reduced to under 15 per thousand, which, in a mixed population such as we have, speaks favourably of the general health of the people. A close analysis of the deaths shows that 22 infants under one year of age died, as against twelve for the year before, giving an infant death rate of 135·8 per thousand births. There were ten deaths between the ages of 1 and five; six between five and 15; three between 15 and 25; 27 between 25 and 65; and 47 of 65 and upwards.

*Births.*—The births were 162—males 87 and females 75. The birth rate equalled 22·35 per thousand inhabitants.

*Notifications.*—There were 15 notifications of infectious diseases. Nine of these were scarlet fever; four of diphtheria; one of typhoid fever; and one of erysipelas. The scarlet fever, although reported from Westford, Rockwell Green, as well as from the centre of the town, did not assume an epidemic form. I could find no clear history of the disorder having been imported in any direct form. The erysipelas was induced by exposure of a wound to decaying animal matter and dirt in general. The four diphtheria cases were started, as I am informed, by contact with a case which developed at a school in another district. However that may be, the state of things at the house where the cases occurred was, as reported to the Council, in every way favourable to the



development of such a disease as well as to the spreading of it. It is not clear how the case of typhoid fever arose. There was nothing found around the patient's house which might cause such a thing. It is conjectured that whilst away from his home the patient must have unwittingly partaken of impure water or something similar.

*Inspections.*—The usual regular inspections were gone through as during former years, and the character of the defects brought to light did not in the main differ much from those noticed during former periods:—A serious nuisance arising from escape of sewer gas into a dwelling owing, as it turned out, to a piece of faulty work; nuisances arising from the accumulation of manure in confined courts and near dwellings; in a rural part of the district several pigs were found in too close a proximity to dwelling-houses; in many instances drains were found inefficient owing to being choked or broken. Orders for abatement of these different complaints were issued and complied with.

*Bakers and Butchers.*—The various bakeries of the district were visited and their condition as to sanitary matters inquired into; so were also the slaughter houses. In two or three instances the sanitary inspector and I felt called upon to point out certain insanitary matters which were communicated to the Council on July 1st.

*Common Lodging House.*—An unsatisfactory state of things at the common lodging house had to be brought to notice and measures were taken to rectify the matters in complaint. One of the most important among these was the introduction of the town water into the premises, and doing away with the supply from the old pump, the water of which was discovered to be impure.

*Water Supply.*—The water supply of the town calls for no special notice, beyond that, through an accident to a hydrant and a gas pipe, which were in close proximity in Waterloo Road, early in July, gas was sucked in at the hydrant and fouled the water in the mains in several places, and houses in the higher part of the town suffered for a while from annoyance caused by the pollution. Five wells were condemned during the year owing to the water in them being polluted and not fit for dietetic purposes. The town water was supplied to 57 additional houses during the year.



*Dairies.*—The question of the Dairies, Cow-sheds, and Milkshops Act, of 1885, has been under the Council's consideration, and the provisions of the Act have by this date been put in action by causing registration and the appointment of an inspector.

*Rainfall.*—The rainfall of the year amounted to 35·26 inches, being over eight inches more than during the year 1896, which happened to be below average.

The sanitary inspector's report book has been in my hands while preparing this report, as on all former occasions.

*Scavenging.*—There is nothing new to report in reference to the scavenging work of the town, which has been carried on systematically and regularly.

*Tramps.* — The number of vagrants taking advantage of the casual ward last year was 1697 against 2027 for the year before. There was no occasion during last year to detain anyone of them owing to infectious illness.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your humble servant,

JOHN MEREDITH, M.D.,

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